

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 EUR-08 IO-03 NEA-06 COA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4845

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCPAC

S E C R E T PORT LOUIS 0904

LIMDIS

CINCUSNAVEUR & CINCPAC FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR XO MP UK

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA - MAURITIAN CONSIDERATIONS

REF: STATE 225259

1. CONCUR FULLY IN DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF LEGAL BASIS AND
ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR USE OF DIEGO GARCIA AND WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY
FURTHER HMG-GOM AGREEMENTS BEYOND THOSE MENTIONED IN REFTEL. IN

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PORT LOUIS 881 I ERRED IN IDENTIFYING RESIDUAL GOM RIGHTS TO

MINERAL AND FISHING EXPLOITATION IN CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WITH UK-GOM DEFENSE AGREEMENTS. AS DEPARTMENT CORRECTLY POINTS OUT THOSE RIGHTS WERE CONTAINED IN AGREED RECORD OF 1965 LANCASTER HOUSE MEETING.

2. FURTHER AGREE THAT POTENTIAL THREAT TO OUR POSITION ON DIEGO FROM GOM IS MORE POLITICAL THAN LEGAL IN NATURE. THE POINT WHICH I AM TRYING TO MAKE, AND WHICH I THINK ALL CONCERNED SHOULD TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY, IS THAT ANY INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AGREEMENT NO MATTER HOW TECHNICALLY SOUND NEEDS A SOLID POLITICAL BASIS IN ORDER TO BE ENDURING AND DEPENDABLE. SOME CYNICAL BOOKWORM ONCE FOUND THAT ALL INTERNATIONAL TREATIES SIGNED "IN PERPETUITY" SINCE 1815 LASTED AN AVERAGE OF ONLY 25 YEARS AND THAT AVERAGE LIFE HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY DECREASING. WHEN ONE OR MORE PARTIES DECIDE THAT IT IS NO LONGER IN THEIR INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL INTERESTS TO ABIDE BY AN AGREEMENT THEY WILL CERTAINLY TRY TO MODIFY OR ABOLISH IT.

3. UNFORTUNATELY IT SEEMS TO ME THAT PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM IS APPROACHING THIS STAGE IN HIS THINKING, FOR BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REASONS. HE IS AN ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALIST. HE TAKES THE LONG VIEW. HE IS ASTUTE AND CRAFTY. HE SEES THIS PART OF THE WORLD CHANGING RAPIDLY FROM WHAT IT WAS A DECADE AGO. HE SEES THE BRITISH OPERATING A STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL AND DOUBTS HE CAN LONG DEPEND ON THE UK DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO MAURITIUS. NON-ALIGNMENT AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION CONSITITUTE HIS LINUS BLANKET--HIS COUNTERWEIGHT TO BIG POWER RIVALRIES IN THIS OCEAN. OUR STANCE ON DIEGO IS NOW A THORN IN HIS SIDE AS HE FACES HIS DOMESTIC OPPOSITION AND HIS NON-ALIGNED NEIGHBORS. HE KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL HE IS IN A WEAK LEGAL POSITION TO ARGUE ABOUT DIEGO. SO HE TRIES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EXTERNAL POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND PRESSURES (PARTICULARLY FROM INDIA, USSR AND LOCAL NON-ALIGNED) WHILE CASTING ABOUT FOR LEGAL LOOPHOLES ON DIEGO. PERHAPS HE THINKS HE HAS NOW FOUND ONE: WHAT I CALL HIS "NUCLEAR INTERFERENCE" GAMBIT REPORTED IN PORT LOUIS 0903. (NOTAL) MANHARD

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